

Immunization Information **IMPORTANT**

read immediately



IMPACT OF POWER OUTAGE ON VACCINE STORAGE

Power outages have significant implications for vaccine storage. The following should provide some guidance regarding vaccine storage issues.

- ♦ Do not open freezers and refrigerators until power is restored.
- ♦ Most refrigerated vaccines are relatively stable at room temperature for limited periods. The vaccines of most concern are MMR and Varicella, which are sensitive to elevated temperatures. MMR vaccine may retain potency at room temperature, depending on the duration of exposure. With regard to Varicella vaccine, CDC will be consulting with Merck Vaccines to determine the best course of action.
- ♦ **Monitor temperatures; do not discard; do not administer affected vaccines until you have discussed with public health authorities.**

IF THE POWER OUTAGE IS ON-GOING:

1. Keep all refrigerators and freezers closed. This will help to conserve the cold mass of the vaccines.
2. Continue to monitor temperatures if possible. Do not open units to check temperatures during the power outage. Instead, record the temperature as soon as possible after the power is restored, and the duration of the outage. This will provide data on the maximum temperature and maximum duration of exposures to elevated temperatures.
3. If alternative storage with a reliable power source is available (i.e. hospital with generator power), transfer to that facility can be considered. If transporting vaccines, measure the temperature of the refrigerator(s) and freezer(s) when the vaccine is removed. If possible, transport the vaccine following proper cold chain procedures for storage and handling or try to record the temperature the vaccine is exposed to during transport. Include a thermometer in each transport container.

WHEN POWER HAS BEEN RESTORED:

1. Record the temperature in the refrigerator/freezer unit as soon as possible after power has been restored. Continue to monitor the temperatures until they reach the normal 2 - 8 degrees Celsius (35-46 degrees Fahrenheit) range in the refrigerator, or -15 degrees Celsius (5 degrees Fahrenheit) or less in the freezer. Be sure to record the duration of increased temperature exposure and the maximum temperature observed.
2. If you are concerned about the exposure or efficacy of any of your vaccine stock, do not administer the vaccine until you have consulted the vaccine manufacturers and the Virginia Vaccines For Children (VVFC) office.
3. Keep exposed vaccine separated from any new product you receive and continue to store at the proper temperatures, if possible.
4. **Do not discard any exposed vaccine.** Any vaccine determined not to be viable may be returned to the VVFC office by filling out a VVFC Vaccine Return form.

Source: http://www.cdc.gov/nip/news/poweroutage_orig.htm

